

From: Carrie Vibert April 10, 2012 9:34:34 AM
Subject: Conservation Commission Minutes 03/20/2012 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_ConserveMin
Cc:

CONSERVATION COMMISSION/INLAND WETLANDS &
WATERCOURSES AGENCY MINUTES
MARCH 20, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Margery Winters, Acting Chairman, called the Regular Meeting of the Conservation Commission to order at 7:34 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Town Offices. Other members and alternates in attendance were Margaret Sexton, Ryan Mihalic, and Donald Rieger. Also present were Howard Beach, Conservation Officer, Janis Prifti, Commission Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Winters appointed Commissioner Rieger to serve for Commissioner Bucknam.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of January 3, 2012 and March 6, 2012

The January 3, 2012, minutes were tabled.

The March 6, 2012, minutes were amended as follows:

On Line 114, "pen" was removed, and the spelling of "takifire" was corrected to "Tackifier".

On Line 116, the spelling of "fescu" was corrected to "fescue".

On Line 121, delete the "r" at the end of the sentence.

On Line 126, the word "and" is added at the end of the line.

On Line 167, delete "near the entrance to Masters School along Land Trust Trail".

On Line 170, change "tri partite" to "tripartite".

On Line 174, delete "thus requiring" and insert "and that"; change the spelling of "tri partite" to "tripartite"; insert after "agreement" the words "was intended".

On Line 175, delete the full line and insert "conservation of the site."

Commissioner Rieger made a motion to approve the March 6, 2012, minutes as amended. Commissioner Sexton seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

a. Application #12-05 of Stratton Forest Homeowner's Association, Owner, and Kevin R. Johnson, Managing Agent, for an Inland Wetlands Permit for clearing and excavation to create a drainage swale on property located at Units 6-16 (Rear) Stratton Forest Way (Map E11, Block 150, Lot 001B) and Units 2-4 (Rear) Thornbush Road (Map E11, Block 150, Lot 001) Zone RD.

Kevin Johnson, Landscape Architect, with the engineering firm of Close, Jensen & Miller, P.C., located in Wethersfield provided the Applicant's presentation; he was accompanied by Armando Colantonio, an Engineer from his firm, and Larry White, Property Manager for Stratton Forest Homeowner's Association. Mr. Johnson provided an orientation of the site plan stating north at the top of the sheet is Farms Village Road and Bushy Hill is at the bottom of the sheet; the Stratton Forest Homeowner's development Application area is a dash black oval area at Stratton Forest Way and Thornbush Road. He said the problem is Stratton Forest Homeowner's Association has been experiencing drainage issues at several units. He said maps from when the development was built show an east-west swale and over the years organic forest debris has decomposed raising the level of the swale so that during storm events water ponds in the back yards of some of the units. His firm was asked to review the situation and propose solutions to alleviate ponding and drainage. He said the wetlands were delineated by a soil scientist and are marked by light blue lines; dark brown shows existing homes.

Mr. Johnson said there were 2 alternatives: 1) a pipe system within the control such as catch basins and yard drains with piping from Thornbush to Stratton Way; or 2) to re-establish the swale that was originally there when the development was built. He said they propose the drainage swale as the most prudent and least invasive; their proposal is for a very narrow 6-8 foot drainage swale limited to a confined area so there is no large disturbance to the forest wetland. He said they propose creating a swale with a range of about 1/2 foot deep at the westerly limits and in the center area there is one area about 2-feet deep; the slope ranges from 1/2% to 3% longitudinally creating a very gentle swale.

Mr. Johnson said they propose constructing the swale in 2 phases beginning with Phase 1 in the lower westerly area and moving on to Phase 2 as shown by the heavy gray lines. He said they will start downstream, work in 50-foot increments with small machines, excavate and carry material to a

temporary staging area with a machine to transfer the material to a dump truck for removal from the site. He said there will be multiple trips back and forth, but as they working in 50-foot increments from downstream to upstream, they will stabilize each area with a lot of handwork before moving on to Phase 2. He said once the grading and swale form is shaped they will place a coconut fiber blanket on the surface - coconut has a longer life than straw and the fabric will decompose in a couple of years; they also will place in the bottom of the swale about 4 inches of plus or minus 2-inch size stone for added long-term stability. He said they also will plant native species - a combination of herbaceous plants, ferns, and deciduous shrubs to try and 1) create a root zone to hold soil in place; and 2) to provide foraging cover for small mammals, nesting food sources for birds, etc. He said they have full erosion controls indicated on the plans - a dark gray area indicates the construction entrance which is curved to preserve and protect substantial Oak trees and they will have silt fence, hay bale dams every 50 feet, and stone check dams to prevent sediment from washing downstream. He stated at the upstream end they have incorporated, at the request of Town staff, a scour hole to settle out any suspended solids coming through the pipe system under Thornbush Road and to reduce velocity before entering the swale. He said they field surveyed every tree in the forested wetland from 2-3 inches and up and the swale is curved and very narrow to avoid as much of the existing vegetation as possible. He said there are erosion and sedimentation control narratives both during and post-construction; they are in receipt of a Town staff memo from last Friday with no planned revisions at this point.

Regarding the need for a public hearing, Mr. Beach said during his absence it was set up to provide homeowner's an opportunity to speak. Mr. Johnson said they plan to begin work in July or August and it is estimated to take 6-8 weeks. He said a couple of the plantings will need to be done next spring; but the grading and core mat will be put in place this year along with plantings appropriate for summer.

Mr. Beach confirmed a map amendment was not needed. Regarding the maintenance plan for the swale, Mr. Johnson said it was previously a much broader swale and this will be much more confined; there will now be an effort not to blow leaves and debris into the swale. Mr. Beach said the Property Manager and Association will maintain the area. Mr. Beach said a scour hole is basically the same as a plunge hole and is permanent. Mr. Johnson said they are choosing a small stone for the swale, but the stone as part of the plunge pool will be larger natural buff-toned stones that will blend into the environment so that rip rap is not visible. He reconfirmed the coconut mat will likely survive a couple of years. He said much of the year the swale is dry with runoff during storm events and growth mostly deciduous and coniferous trees, but the storms have brought trees down so more sunlight will get in and provide more opportunity for

understory to come in; the fern root systems make a dense mat. Mr. Beach said with such a low profile stream, velocity will be low. Mr. Johnson said with 4 inches of stone, over time there will be growth. He said about 80 cubic yards or 6 dump truck loads of material will be removed and about 20 cubic yards of stone will be brought in; they will stockpile the topsoil offsite, protect it, and bring it back to re-establish grass, etc. He said the 400-foot area is 6-8 feet wide and ranges from 1/2 foot to 2-feet deep. He said they will use New England Wetland Plants in Amherst. Mr. Beach said the Town Engineer agreed this is the least invasive project for the area.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Rieger seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion that this is a regulated activity because it involves construction of a swale in a wetland area which includes removing material from the former swale and deposition of stone and material in the proposed swale. Commissioner Rieger seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion that this is not a significant activity based upon the presentation of the applicant and the information contained in the staff report. Commissioner Rieger seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mihalic made a motion that we approve the permit subject to the conditions set forth in the staff report and any other conditions that staff has during the construction phase. Commissioner Rieger seconded the motion.

Commissioner Mihalic amended his motion to approve the permit stating the construction has to occur and finish within the low-flow period. Commissioner Rieger seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

V. PRESENTATION(S), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

VII. RECEIPT OF NEW APPLICATION(S)

a. Application #12-06 of The Ethel Walker School, Owner, for an Inland Wetlands Permit for renovating and expanding two existing natural grass fields, a softball field, and synthetic field along with associated erosion controls and drainage improvements within 100 feet of the upland review area on property located at 230 Bushy Hill Road (Map D15, Block 115, Lot 006), 101 and 103 Sand Hill Road (Map E14, Block 115, Lot 006), and Bushy Hill Road (Map E15, Block 115, Lot 006).

Mr. Beach said this Application for the campus is east of Bushy Hill Road to expand the Athletic Fields and put a drain under them; there is no activity in the wetlands but some of the construction is within the upland review area; this Application will be on the next agenda. The Commissioners agreed a Public Hearing should be set for this Application.

Mr. Beach stated an Application was received late today for Bill Selig's property on Riverside Road; the Commission gave approval to this Applicant a couple of years ago for barn structures, etc. and the permit expired. He said the Applicant would like to renew the permit and immediately do work on the house and some small barns and wait to work on a larger barn. He said the Applicant had a soil scientist look at the land which is in a flood plain and alluvial soil, but it is all bank run sand and doesn't qualify as wetland soil; the Applicant has not yet requested a wetlands map amendment, but is still requesting a wetlands permit.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

None.

IX. DISCUSSION

None.

X. CORRESPONDENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Mihalic provided a copy of a 2/27/12 letter he received from the Town regarding "Change in Terms of Office" stating the term of each Commissioner as follows:

Regular Members: Andrew G. Bucknam, Darren P. Cunningham, Richard A. Miller, Jr. and Dominick Zackeo with terms from 2012-2016
Ryan M. Mihalic, Margaret R. Sexton, and Margery C.B. Winters with terms from 2010-2014

Alternate Members: Donald F. Rieger with a term from 2010-2014
Patrick R. Kottas with a term from 2011-2015

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Rieger made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Commissioner Mihalic seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Ryan Mihalic, Secretary